

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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SUBJ: REACTION TO THREE ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION/RECOMMENDATIONS

REF: SEOUL 5552 (PR 020303ZJUL 77)

SUMMARY. BOTH PRESS AND MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE OBSERVERS
AGREE THAT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN RULING AND OPPOSITION CAMPS
LEADING TO THREE FINAL DRAFT RESOLUTION/RECOMMENDATIONS
WERE POSITIVE AND SIGNIFICANT STEP FORWARD. END SUMMARY

1. THE GENERAL ACCORD REACHED BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
ON TWO RESOLUTIONS AND ONE RECOMMENDATION ON TROOP
WITHDRAWALS, ANTI-ROK ACTIVITIES IN THE U.S., AND ROK
DOMESTIC POLITICAL ISSUES (SEPTEL) IS A MATTER OF
GRATIFICATION FOR THE PARTICIPANTS AND, EXCEPT FOR
SMALL MINORITY ANTI-GOVERNMENT DISSIDENTS, IS BEING
WELL RECEIVED. MAJOR SUBJECTS OF PRAISE ARE JOINT
RECOMMENDATION TO THE GOVERNMENT REGARDING DOMESTIC
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POLITICAL MATTERS AND FACT THAT ASSEMBLY HAS ACTED FOR
FIRST TIME IN VERY LONG TIME IN MEANINGFUL WAY.

2. WHILE THEY NOTE THAT RESOLUTIONS
REPRESENT ONLY A SINGLE STEP IN RIGHT DIRECTION, NOT THE
MILLENNIUM, ALMOST ALL NATIONAL ASSEMBLYMEN WE HAVE TALKED
TO APPEAR SATISFIED THAT FOR ONCE THEY DID NOT ONLY DEBATE

A KEY ISSUE BUT ACTUALLY NEGOTIATED IT. GOVERNMENT MEMBERS, MANY OF WHOM PRIVATELY HAD VOICED DESIRE FOR SOME TIME TO SEE SOME RELAXATION WITH REGARD TO MYONGDONG PRISONERS, SEEM JUST AS PLEASED AS NDP THAT SIGNIFICANT NEGOTIATIONS HAVE TAKEN PLACE. AS FOR OPPOSITION ITSELF, NDP CHAIRMAN YI CHOL-SUNG, WHO HAS TAKEN THE GREAT MAJORITY OF HIS PARTY WITH HIM, TOLD EMBOFF THAT INTERNAL POLITICAL RECOMMENDATION WAS PROOF THAT HIS "MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD" STRATEGY WAS WORKING. CHAIRMAN YI INDICATED ALMOST ALL EXCEPT HARD CORE OPPOSITION WAS NOW ABOARD ACCEPTING HIS STRATEGY. NDP FLOOR LEADER SONG WON-YON EXPOUNDED FURTHER, TELLING EMBASSY THAT ALTHOUGH SOME REFERENCES TO U.S. WERE STRONG IN FLOOR RESOLUTIONS IT WAS SMALL PRICE TO PAY FOR GETTING THIRD INTERNAL POLITICAL RECOMMENDATION ACCEPTED ON FLOOR.

3. REACTION AMONG "YOUNG TURK" ELEMENT WITHIN THE ASSEMBLY WHO HAVE LONG ADVOCATED MORE CRITICAL STANCE AGAINST ROKG HAS BEEN MORE NEGATIVE BUT THIS TROUP HAS AT LEAST TEMPORARILY BEEN ECLIPSED BY THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE OF APPROBATION. A SHARPER REACTION, HOWEVER, COMES FROM STRONG ANTI-GOVERNMENT CRITICS, INCLUDING TWO ACTIVISTS CLOSE TO KIM TAE-CHUNG, WHO BELIEVE ASSEMBLY ACTION IS SIMPLY A SHOW AND NOT REALLY MEANINGFUL.

4. PRESS REACTION GENERALLY CORROBORATES COMMENTS OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THOSE WE HAVE TALKED TO. JULY 5 TONGA ILBO EDITORIAL HIT KEY, GENERALLY SHARED VIEW IN ITS UPBEAT ASSESSMENT OF ASSEMBLY NEGOTIATING PROGRESS. TONGA SAID THAT ALTHOUGH LANGUAGE OF RESOLUTIONS WAS NOT ALWAYS SATISFACTORY, "IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT FOR FIRST TIME SINCE YUSHIN CONSTITUTION WAS IMPLEMENTED, RULING AND OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE MADE JOINT EFFORT TO BREAK THROUGH POLITICAL BOTTLENECK" AND CONDUCT NEGOTIATIONS ON GIVE AND TAKE BASIS. LOCAL PRESS GENERALLY SUPPORTED ALL THREE RESOLUTIONS AS WRITTEN ALTHOUGH TONGA THOUGHT THAT THAT KIM HYUNG-UK RESOLUTION TENDED TO BLAME U.S. EXCLUSIVELY WHEN IT MIGHT ALSO BE PARTLY AN ROKG RESPONSIBILITY. SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS NOTED FAVORABLY THAT RULING PARTY HAD BEEN GIVEN NEGOTIATING FLEXIBILITY AND THAT OPPOSITION HAD NOT TAKEN OBSTRUCTIONIST ATTITUDE THIS TIME.

5. COMMENT: ALL EVIDENCE AND COMMENTS INDICATE THAT RESOLUTIONS WERE INDEED PRODUCT OF TOUGH BARGAINING WITH GIVE AND TAKE ON BOTH SIDES. GRANTING THAT BARGAINING TOOK PLACE BASICALLY BECAUSE GOVERNMENT DECIDED THIS WAS BEST WAY TO DEVELOP A BROADER DEGREE OF SUPPORT AT THIS TIME AND BECAUSE ROKG SAW RECOMMENDATION ON DOMESTIC

MATTERS TO ITS OWN AS WELL AS NDP ADVANTAGE, IT NONETHELESS
REPRESENTS MEANINGFUL STEP FORWARD; PREVIOUSLY ROKG GRANTED
NEIGHER OF THESE THINGS. RESOLUTION ON DOMESTIC AFFAIRS AND
MEANINGFUL ASSEMBLY SESSION WILL STILL HAVE TO BE VALIDATED
IN FUTURE, BUT ON THE FACE OF IT WE BELIEVE THIS SESSION
DESERVES AT LEAST SMALL CHEER FOR ITS DEMOCRACY.
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